Life of First Signer for Independence

AN adequate biography of the first signer of the Declaration of Independence has appeared at last in the *Life of Charles Carroll of Carrollton* by Lewis A. Leonard of Albany, one of the editors of the Albany *Times-Union*, the well-known Democratic newspaper conducted by former Gov. Martin H. Glynn. Gov. Glynn furnishes a preface to the book in which he declares that it should be in the library of every lover of American history. The part played by Charles Carroll of Carrollton in the drama of American independence has not been fully appreciated by historians and this volume is designed to remedy their neglect. "It does justice," says Gov. Glynn, "to a man to whom Americans owe an ineffable debt of gratitude."

Charles Carroll of Carrollton has always been a prominent personality among the signers of the Declaration of Independence for several reasons: (1) He was the only signer who appended his residence to his name as a part of his signature; (2) he was the first member of Congress who actually signed the Declaration; (3) he was the only person of the Roman Catholic faith among the signers; (4) he was by far the wealthiest man among them; and (5) he outlived all the others.

Many persons suppose that the Declaration of Independence was signed on the 4th of July, 1776, the day when it was adopted by Congress; such, however, is not the fact. It was then signed by John Hancock and Charles Thompson, as President and Secretary, but by no one else at that time. Congress subsequently determined to have a fair copy signed by all the members and the signing began on August 2, 1776, Charles Carroll of Carrollton being the first to affix his signature at the request of John Hancock. Thirty-five members signed on that day, but the last name was not affixed until some time in December. John Dickinson, a Quaker member from Pennsylvania and a man of unquestioned patriotism, refused to sign because he did not like to take any action which might be provocative of war.

Early in 1826 Congress commemorated the fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration by ordering 250 engraved copies of the instrument to be made and distributed among the signers and the families of those who had died. At this time three of the signers were still living—John Adams, Thomas Jefferson and Charles Carroll of Carrollton. Adams and Jefferson, however, died on July 4, 1826, before the engraving of the Declaration had been completed; so that Charles Carroll of Carrollton was the only signer who survived to receive his copy of the document. It was presented to him, together with a letter of transmittal from John Quincy Adams, then Secretary of State, at Doughoregan Manor in Maryland on September 15, 1826.

It has often been asserted that the subject of this biography added the words "of Carrollton" to his name when he signed the Declaration of Independence lest some of the other Charles Carrolls who were quite numerous in Maryland should be held responsible for his act. The late John H. B. Latrobe, the eminent Baltimore lawyer, who knew Mr. Carroll intimately, disbelieved this story. The estate at Carrollton was transferred to him by his father shortly after the young man came home upon completing his education in Europe, and thereafter, for purposes of identification, he always called himself and wrote his name: Charles Carroll of Carrollton.

When the first Congress of the United States under the Federal Constitution met in New York Charles Carroll of Carrollton was a Senator from Maryland. He was a member of the Judiciary Committee and opposed the bill giving titles to the President and Vice-President, which was one of the first measures to provoke earnest controversy but was ultimately defeated. "There was a heated discussion over the question of Congress accompanying the President to St. Paul's Church and attending divine service. Mr. Carroll did not regard the discussion worth the time that was given to it and refused to vote against the motion. He didn't oppose and went to church. He was a Federalist and the Federalists were mostly on the side of going to church with the President." His personal friendship for Washington may have had something to do with this. "He spent more time with Washington at army headquarters," we are told, "than any other civilian, and was more closely identified with the purposes, impulses and activities of the great commander than any other man in or out of the army." It was largely through the efforts of Charles Carroll of Carrollton that the infamous conspiracy against Washington, known as the Conway Cabal, was foiled. When he was about to visit Valley Forge as a member of a committee to confer with the General Dr. Benjamin Rush expressed the hope that he would find that Washington ought to be deposed. "I shall not" responded Mr. Carroll. "Isn't that rendering a verdict before you have heard the testimony?" asked Dr. Rush. "It is and I have," Mr. Carroll answered. Rush then suggested that it might be necessary to put a man like Gen. Gates at the head of the army, in which case he hoped Mr. Carroll would support him loyally. Weighing his words with care, Mr. Carroll deliberately responded: "In that case I should wash my hands of the whole affair and retire to private life. I would leave this country or not, as circumstances required, but I would have nothing more to do with this cause." He clearly foresaw that the removal of Gen. Washington from his command would be fatal to the cause of American independence, and it was this conviction that led him to speak so strongly and, as the event proved, so effectively.

Charles Carroll of Carrollton was not only an American patriot in the broadest sense of the term, a champion of the cause of independence and one of the founders of the Federal Government, but he was also the first citizen of the State of Maryland from the time he entered upon public life to the day of his death, and was so denominated in the common speech of the people on account of his constant devotion to the welfare of his native State. When the Legislature enacted a law prohibiting its members from sitting in Congress he resigned his office as Senator of the United States in order to retain his seat in the Maryland Senate, just as De Witt Clinton resigned from the United States Senate in order to become Mayor of the city of New York. "Of Charles Carroll it can be said that his history is the history of the Maryland of his day, and from Maryland his influence radiated far and wide throughout the land."

On July 4, 1828, he laid the corner-stone of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, this being the last public function in which he participated. In a letter to the Blacksmiths' Association thanking them for the implements which he used on the occasion Mr. Carroll wrote: "You observe that republics can exist and that under that form of government people can be happier than under any other. That the republic created by the Declaration of Independence may continue to the end of time is my fervent prayer. That protracted existence, however, will depend on the morality, sobriety and industry of the people and on no part more than on the mechanics forming in our cities the greatest number of their useful inhabitants."

Charles Carroll of Carrollton was ever a devoted son of the Church. According to his friend Mr. Latrobe, he used to say of the Revolution: "Maybe there was one Catholic in America that took the British side. But if so he left no record of it, and we are glad that he did not."

LIFE OF CHARLES CARROLL OF CARROLLTON. By Lewis A. Leonard. Moffat, Yard & Co. $2.50.

"Travels in London"

A LIMITED number of readers will like the quiet, personal, carefully polished essays which compose Charles Morley's *Travels in London*. They are like Lamb, minus much of Lamb's sparkle. They give marvellously realistic pictures of the Tower, the Abbey precincts, Drury Lane. They drag the reader under old wine cellars for a look at a Roman wall discovered in the process of London architectural excavations. They are faithful, familiar, artistic, with a lovable leisure about them.

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The essays bear out what is said in one of the three notes on Morley which form a long and interesting preface to the book proper: "Admirable journalist as he was, his method was in all the exact opposite of the journalistic. He wrote and rewrote, tore up and began again, and even copied out his copy." This is the testimony of J. A. Spender, who worked with Morley on the *Pall Mall Gazette*.

Sir Edward Cook and J. P. Collins, likewise journalistic associates, contribute studies of their friend. Together the three give an interesting glimpse of British journalism in the last twenty years of the nineteenth century.

Morley worked under his uncle, John Morley, now Viscount Morley, on the *Pall Mall Gazette* and later under the brilliant and innovative William Stead. He ran the *Pall Mall Budget*, a weekly compendium not without suggestions of the then undeveloped Sunday magazine. Later he served the *Westminster Gazette* and the *Daily News* and refused the editorship of the *Illustrated London News*.

Morley was as quiet as his essays, but he had an excellent journalistic judgment and an ability to get the story he went after. He dug up much odd material about London past and present—his *Heads of the Mighty*, for instance, was the result of clever manipulation of a London hatter who was made to furnish material for an article on his famous clients.

Another contribution exposed the treatment of influenza by London physicians, a young lady obligingly acting as Morley's medium in the collecting of innumerable prescriptions.

Some who are not responsive to the quiet spell of the London sketches will find the spirited picture of Rugby in the '60s exciting enough. All who like good biography will like the story of Morley's life. This, indeed, may find a larger popularity than the artistic but scarcely sparkling studies of London streets and buildings.

TRAVELS IN LONDON. By Charles Morley. E. P. Dutton & Co. $2.

Harry Lauder's book, *A Minstrel in France*, has been brought out by Hearst's International Library Company.

Several books have been written about Broadway; now Joseph Jackson has written and published a book on Market street, Philadelphia.

Don Marquis has lost some weight lately. He has been writing a preface to Benjamin De Casseres's *Interviews With Kings*, which Philip Goodman is about to publish. The kings include Kaiser Bill, Mr. Romanoff, Von Tirpitz, B. Shaw, D'Annunzio, Thomas Hardy and H. G. Wells.

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